

**NEWPORT COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2006**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:08 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano, Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt, Treasurer Mark Stenning, Gregory Fater, Lisa Gross, Rocky Kempenaar, Donna Olney Kohler, Brian Moore, Karen Oakley, Len Panaggio, Susan Samson, Laurie Stroll and Harlan Tyler

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED WERE:

Katie Wilkinson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT WERE:

Pieter Roos

STAFF PRESENT WERE:

Evan Smith, Debbie Gatta, Kathryn Farrington, J. Timothy Walsh and Mary Ann Kelly

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Gregory Fater and seconded by Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt. The motion passed unanimously.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report was read by Mark Stenning. City Tax was down 0.69% and Regional Tax was up 26.74% for a combined growth of 5.27%. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt and seconded by Laurie Stroll. The motion passed unanimously.

III. STAFF REPORTS:

Each Staff Report will now reflect the figures of the previous month's activity.

A. CONVENTION & TOURISM:

Evan introduced Tim Walsh, who is the interim department head for Sales. Tim has worked as Director of Sales at the Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau for ten years. Tim reported that this Thursday the bureau will be doing a run through of a new software program, called D3000. This program should make staff more efficient at the bureau. In July, Sales is exhibiting at MPI WEC in Dallas, TX with the Newport Harbor Hotel and the Hotel Viking. At the end of July, Sales will be going to Austin, TX for the DMAI Conference. The Hotel Viking has secured a very high profile FICP Conference to be held in Newport in August. Both Tim and Laurie Stroll are working on this event. The Ambassador Campaign kicked off May 15th with a luncheon at the Rhode Island State House where five ambassadors were honored. Each ambassador will also be honored with a floor tile on the first floor of the Newport Visitors Center. There has been follow-up advertising of the Ambassador Campaign in The Newport Daily News, The Providence Journal and The Providence Business News. The Sales Department is having a very good first quarter.

B. MARKETING:

Kathryn presented each board member with the new NCCVB DVD. It is available to anyone in the industry. There is also a European version available on VHS. The DVD was done in conjunction with our sponsor, RITBA (the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority). A local firm, Perspectives, was used to produce the DVD. Kathryn also

presented the new Summer Destination Package to board members. The sponsor of the Summer Destination Package is Cuffy's. Each board member received a Cuffy's signature Tee Shirt. Rack cards have also been produced to promote both the summer and winter packages. Kathryn explained the monthly media report. The Marketing Department hosts travel journalists, who in turn give Newport free ink. Kathryn also presented the Destination Newport Coupon Book to board members. The sponsor for the coupon book this year is Newport Grand.

C. OPERATIONS:

Cathy Morrison was absent. Evan reported that the downstairs is in peak season and fully staffed. Sister City flags are hanging in the walkway from the parking garage to the Visitors Bureau. The Visitors Bureau now stays open until 7p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. Evan asked board members to help get the word out on the new closing hours. Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano congratulated Operations on how beautiful the outside of the building looks (the plantings, flags, etc.).

D. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Evan spoke about the many accolades and letters the staff has received. He said it is a testimony to the commitment, passion and excellence of the NCCVB staff. Evan also reported that four attorneys

have responded to the RFP for legal services at the Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau. The attorneys are Thomas Orr, Peter Brockmann, Russell Jackson and Christopher Behan. Evan recommended that the bureau secure the services of Russell Jackson. Susan Samson asked what the job of staff attorney would be and Harlan Tyler asked for some background information on the applicants. Evan explained the job of staff attorney and gave background information on the attorneys. A motion to accept Evan's recommendation was made by Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt and seconded by Donna Olney Kohler. It passed unanimously. Evan also reported to the board that he has received resumes from nine external applicants for the position of Vice President of Sales. Tim Walsh has also applied and is the only internal candidate. Evan is looking for a candidate who will motivate and inspire the sales team forward. The application process is open until June 20th. There are plans to start interviewing the chosen candidates after July 4th.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. FINANCE:

The Finance Committee convened at the Visitors Bureau on Tuesday, May 30th. The first agenda item was to review six community support grant requests from Festa Italiana, the Portuguese Cultural Festival, Fort Adam's Trust, the Newport Public Library, America's House's

Mile of History and the Newport Gulls. The recommendation of the Finance Committee is to fund \$500.00 community support grants to Festa Italiana, the Portuguese Cultural Festival and Fort Adam's Trust for promotional needs. The Newport Public Library was not seen as a tourism function and there was concern about the commercial aspect of America House's request. The Newport Gulls would receive a marketing sponsorship to promote a Newport Gull's evening. Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee. It was seconded by Brian Moore and passed. Gregory Fater abstained from the vote.

There is \$1,900.00 remaining for this fiscal year. The Finance Committee recommended putting the remaining funds in escrow for potential grant requests that fall within the guidelines to be distributed to the five remaining communities, excluding Newport. Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt made a motion to accept the recommendation. It was seconded by Rocky Kempenaar and passed. Gregory Fater abstained from the vote.

The third item discussed was a proposal from BizGrader for electronic business ratings. The Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau would work with this company to create a card inviting visitors to go to a website to complete a survey on questions which the Visitors Center determines. The cost is \$4,400.00 to create and \$2,900.00 each year to sustain the program. Following discussion a motion was made by Mark Stenning to appropriate

expenditure up to \$4,400.00 for the year 2006 to implement a website survey. It was seconded by Harlan Tyler and passed unanimously.

B. SALES AND MARKETING:

Lisa Gross reported that the Sales and Marketing Committee meeting has been rescheduled to the end of July (possibly July 18th or 25th).

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Karen Oakley nominated Katie Wilkinson to the office of secretary of the board. It was seconded by Harlan Tyler and passed unanimously.

Harlan Tyler asked Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano to follow-up on the House and Senate Bills and moneys given to the Providence Warwick CVB and the state.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano explained that there are a number of issues that affect tourism happening in the state of Rhode Island. She asked board members to discuss whether or not the NCCVB Board of Directors should take a position on the gaming question. After a lengthy discussion it was determined that apathy gives the appearance that the bureau and its board accept gaming. Therefore, a position must be taken. Greg Fater stated that if you oppose this gaming question, you should oppose all gambling.

Gregory Fater suggested referring the question to all board committees to share their language as to the gaming issue and to have an official position with a motion in August.

The next issue was the question of endorsement of Bellevue Gardens. Mark Stenning made a motion asking the board to support the proposal that Bellevue Gardens has outlined. It was seconded by Karen Oakley. There were four votes in favor of the motion and six votes against. Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano excused herself.

Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt made a motion not to take a position on the issue. It was seconded by Len Panaggio and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt to refer a request for a marketing support grant from the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce to the Finance Committee. It was seconded by Len Panaggio and passed unanimously.

The last issue was a request from the City of Newport for a donation for fireworks. A marketing support grant is not an option. A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt to notify the city that they have applied too late for a marketing support grant and no funds are available. It was seconded by Len Panaggio. After discussion Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt withdrew his motion and made a new motion that a \$500.00 donation be appropriated to the city from the marketing sponsorship budget. It

was seconded by Mark Stenning and passed. It was opposed by Donna Olney Kohler and Gregory Fater.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.